(b) if so, what are the detailed functions thereof ;

(c) what are the checks and balances intended to be used by Government to ensure the latest and correct market-related information, give details thereof ;

(d) whether this 'Trade Point' will collect information from the country about export surplus available product-wise and commodity-wise to channelise it for exports; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Trade Point is a gateway to global newtworking & is a source of trade related information which provides actual and potential traders with data about business and market opportunities potential clients and suppliers, trade regulations and requirements, etc.,; Being a project set up under the UNCTAD's special programme on Trade Efficiency, the Trade Point receives electronic trading opportunities generated by the Trade Point Development Centre of UNCTAD to which the Trade Points set up in the world have been connected; the market related information is received from the Trade Points, set up in other countries with the sponsorship of the Governments and with participation by industry. The use of technology through electronic networking enables recent information being received and disseminated on-line through the Trade Point.

(d) and (e) Trade Point is not engaged in the collection of any primary statistics; however, export offers product-wise or commodity-wise, if received at the Trade Point can be disseminated through the Global Network.

Import of Coal by Government of Gujarat

749. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Central Government has granted permission to the Government of Gujarat to Import Coal ;

(b) if so, for what period ;

(c) whether the State Government has imported coal during the current financial year ; and

(d) if so, the quantity of coal imported during the above period ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d)Under the current Export and Import Policy, import of coal is freely permitted and in view of this, no permission for the import of coal is required from the Ministry of Commerce. State-wise import data is not maintained separately.

Commission on Labour Standards and International Trade

750. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) when does the commission, headed by Dr. Subramanian Swamy, on labour standards and international trade including social clause issue related to GATT, expects to submit its interim report as also the final report to Government;

(b) what are the terms of reference of this commission; and

(c) whether any time-limit has been laid down for the commissions to submit its report; if not, the reasons thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (c) The 'Commission for the Study of Issues concerning the Protection of Labour Rights and Related Matters' is required to submit its recommendations within a period of one year. It is not required to submit an interim report.

(b) The terms of reference of the Commission are as follows :-

I. The Commission would inter-alia study the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions relating to :—

(i) exploitative labour practices which would include prison labour, slave labour and child labour;

(ii) freedom of association and organisation of workers ;

(iii) Practices of collective bargaining by employees and workers; and

(iv) non-discrimination in employment.

II. The Commission would study the response of the Government of India to the International Conventions developed by ILO, would assess the adequacy of such responses and would suggest appropriate modifications in the light of the dynamics of changing conditions pertaining to these matters. The Commission would examine the existing legal framework in these areas to support these standards. The Commission would, in particular, assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the implementation machinery incorporated in these laws. The Commission would also suggest modifications, where necessary, to strengthen the effectiveness of the implementation machinery.

(c) The Commission would develop an action plan for overcoming the identified problems and in adequacies in the area of protection of labour rights in India' taking into account the discussions/ conclusions on these issues including the 'social clause' in the appropriate international forum and evolve suitable recommendations regarding the future course of action by the Government of India.

Duty Free Import of Sugar, LPG and Consumer Goods

751. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had taken a decision to allow duty free import of sugar, LPG etc.;

(b) if so, what were the reasons that weighed favourably with Government to arrive at such a decision ;

(c) the extent to which the decision has proved beneficial to the people of the country in getting these commodities at reasonable rates/prices;

(d) whether there is also a proposal to allow duty free import of cousumer goods ;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) what will be the impact of these imports on the domestic industry ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (f) Under the current Export and Import Policy, 1992—97, import of Sugar and LPG is freely permitted by all persons. Raw sugar, refined sugar and white sugar, refined sugar and white sugar are fully exempt from basic Customs duty and additional duty while LPG attracts a basic Custom duty of 15% and additional duty of 10% ad valorem. The review of the Export and Import Policy is a continuous